

# Grading Plans

*Fairfax County*  
VIRGINIA

## Land Development Services

Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

**Hours of Operation:** Monday - Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Friday: 9:15 to 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** **Herrity Building**  
12055 Government Center Parkway  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035  
Plan & Document Control: 703-324-1730  
Site Permits: 703-324-1510



Visit us on the web at: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes)

This publication will help clarify the requirements for the grading plan process for a residential home, or any residential projects that may disturb land.

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## **WHAT IS A GRADING PLAN**

A grading plan is a drawing of your construction site showing existing and proposed topography, environmental controls, demolition, and improvements to the land. There are two ways Fairfax County classifies grading plans for residential projects.

- **Infill Lot Grading Plan:** For new houses, additions, garages, or pools. Infill lot grading plans are also referred to as non-bonded lot grading plans. You will also need to apply for a **Building Permit** and submit plans for your structure. Related publications are available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes).
- **Rough Grading Plan:** For grading of the land only, without any building construction, such as driveways, demolitions, soil stockpiles, etc. You will also need to apply for a **Land Disturbing Permit**.

## **WHEN GRADING PLANS ARE REQUIRED**

A Grading Plan is required if your project:

- disturbs more than 2500 square feet of land,\* or
- blocks existing drainage patterns, or
- requires more than 18 inches of cut or fill (soil that is removed or added).

\*2500 square feet:

- includes 10 feet added to the perimeter of the footprint of your project
- the stockpile area and a 10-foot wide access area from the point of the street or driveway to the edge of the disturbed area may be required.

## **REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF A GRADING PLAN**

You will need **10** copies of the grading plan. The following must be included on the plan.

Note: A certified land surveyor, certified architect, or professional civil engineer licensed in the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to prepare and seal the grading plan. The plan sheet size must be 24"x36" and the scale must be 1"=50' or larger.

- ☐ Vicinity Map
- ☐ Existing contours of the land (topography)
- ☐ Proposed contours of the land (at two foot intervals) and spot elevations as needed
- ☐ Soil identification/Soils Map
- ☐ House location, address and tax map number
- ☐ Limits of clearing and grading
- ☐ Siltation and erosion control measures/plan
- ☐ Easements (existing and proposed – for existing easements, provide deed book and page number)
- ☐ Tree Cover Calculations
- ☐ Impervious Acreage calculations for Pro-Rata Share assessment
- ☐ Watershed Name/Area disturbed within watershed
- ☐ Property lines with bearing and distance
- ☐ Proposed construction entrance and access road (please note road as state, private, or "Chapter 2" road, see definition below)
- ☐ Distance from structure corners to property lines (set back information)
- ☐ Percentage of front yard surface area if lot is in the R-1, R-2, R-3, or R-4 zoning districts
- ☐ Elevation of first floor, basement, garage, and driveway profile as applicable
- ☐ Location of foundation drain outfall
- ☐ Signed Wetlands Certification
- ☐ Outfall Analysis and Predevelopment Conditions Narrative
- ☐ Resource Protection Area boundaries, if present
- ☐ Floodplain limits, if present
- ☐ Signature and seal of the licensed professional (land surveyor, engineer, or architect)
- ☐ If the grading plan is for an infill lot, the following certification is required to be on the plan: "I hereby certify that all appropriate County approvals were obtained in accordance with the process required by the Subdivision Ordinance in effect at the time of the creation of lot(s)\_\_\_\_\_. The lot(s) was (were) created as part of the \_\_\_\_\_Subdivision approved by Fairfax County on \_\_\_\_\_ and recorded in Deed Book \_\_\_\_\_at Page \_\_\_\_\_ in Fairfax County Land Records." If the lot was created by metes and bounds description or unapproved plat, the certification statement shall include sufficient information to demonstrate that the lot meets the eligibility requirements for validation.

- ☐ If the lot is or will be served by a septic field and/or well:
  - Septic system and/or well location, including septic field design details and well-to-dwelling-water-line route
  - Underground location of public water line, electric and/or gas lines
- ☐ If the site is in a *problem soil* area:
  - Soil types, soil maps, and the soils test report for all soils on the property
  - Geotechnical Report or Soils Waiver
  - Foundation Detail

**DEFINITION:** *Problem soils* are soil types that may have a high water table, expansive clays, or other behavioral problems. Please refer to our Soil Ratings publication for additional information: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/soilrating.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/soilrating.htm).

- ☐ If proposed impervious area is greater than 18% of the total lot, then Chesapeake Bay Ordinance (CBAY) Waiver is required.
- ☐ If the site is accessing a "Chapter 2" road, please note it on the grading plan.

**DEFINITION:** "*Chapter 2*" roads were dedicated as public streets but never built to state standards. These uncommon roads may require the posting of escrows, or reconstruction of the road. Please contact the Engineer of the Day at **703-324-1575** for additional information. ("Chapter 2" is part of the County Code.)

- ☐ A **Responsible Land Disturber Certification (RLD)** is required before permit issuance. This certification ensures that the individual conducting the land disturbing activities holds a certificate of competence by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The form is available at Plan and Document Control located on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Herrity Building, **703-324-1730**.

## **FEES/COSTS**

### **Grading Plan Review Fee**

Grading plan review fee information is available from Plan and Document Control, located in the Herrity Building on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor. Call **703-324-1730** for more information. A link to the Fee Schedule, in Chapter 104 of the County Code, is available through [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government).

### **Pro-Rata Share Assessment**

The pro-rata share assessment helps recover the cost of maintaining downstream, off-site stormwater detention facilities. The assessment is based on the increase in the amount of impervious area per acre created by the proposed construction. Call **703-324-1950** to obtain additional information.

### **Conservation Deposit**

A Conservation Agreement and deposit are required to ensure that erosion and sediment control measures shown on the grading plan are properly installed and maintained and that the lot will be graded according to the approved grading plan. The conservation deposit will be returned after the improvements depicted in the plan are complete and the lot is properly stabilized, provided funds have not been used to correct deficiencies.

Information on the conservation deposit, Conservation Agreement and related forms are available from Site Permits in Suite 204, on the second floor of the Herrity Building, **703-324-1510** and from Plan and

Document Control, on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Herrity Building, **703-324-1730**. See page 5 for additional instructions on how these funds are released.

### **Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Permit and Bond**

If your property is on a state road, you will need to obtain a VDOT permit and post a bond for construction. Contact VDOT at **703-383-2888** for additional information.

### **Health Department Fees**

If your property is or will be served by a septic system or well, a fee will be charged for the review of your grading plan. Contact the Health Department at **703-246-2201** for additional information.

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## **GRADING PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS**

Once your grading plan is completed, you are ready to begin the approval process.

Step 1) **Permit Application Center:** If your plan is an **Infill Lot Grading Plan** and involves a structure, submit a building permit application and related building plans to the Permit Application Center on the second floor of the Herrity Building.

<b>TIP:</b> Building Plans and Grading Plans can be reviewed concurrently.
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Step 2) **Health Department:** If the lot is or will be served by a septic system or well, take **all ten sets** of the grading plan to the Health Department (along with your building permit application, see above) for review, approval, and fee payment. The Health Department is located at 10777 Main Street, Fairfax, Virginia. Staff can be contacted at **703-246-2201**.

<b>TIP:</b> If you have your building plans with you, the Health Department may be able to approve both your grading plan and your building permit application at the same time, saving you a return trip for building plan approval.
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Step 3) **VDOT:** If your property is on a state road, take **two additional sets** of the grading plan to VDOT for review and approval, and pay VDOT bond. Call the VDOT Permits office at **703-383-2888** for additional information. VDOT is located at 14685 Avion Parkway, Suite 120, Chantilly, Virginia.

Step 4) **Plan and Document Control:** Bring **nine (9)** sets of the grading plan, with Health Department approval if required, to Plan and Document Control, on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Herrity Building for review, approval, and fee payment. You will also receive a Responsible Land Disturber (RLD) Certification, which must be submitted any time before final issuance of the permit.

- **Infill Lot Grading Plan:** Plan and Document Control will provide you with a Pro Rata share form and a Conservation Agreement.
- **Rough Grading Plan:** *after plan approval* Site Permits will send the engineer that prepared the grading plan a Land Disturbing Permit application, a Pro Rata Share form, and a Conservation Agreement.

Step 5) **Check Status:** Due to the volume of plan submissions, staff is not able to notify you regarding the status of your plan. You may verify the status of the grading plan and whether the Pro Rata Share has been determined by:

- Checking our website, **[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ldsnet)**.
- Contacting Plan and Document Control at **703-324-1730** or by e-mail at **[siteplanstatus@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:siteplanstatus@fairfaxcounty.gov)**.
- Contacting Site Permits at **703-324-1510**

**Note:** Please have your grading plan number, provided to you at plan submission, ready to expedite the process.

Step 6) **Plan and Document Control:** Once your Grading Plan is approved, return to Plan and Document Control to pay the Pro Rata Share.

Step 7) **Site Permits:** After paying the Pro Rata Share, go to Site Permits, Suite 204 on the second floor of the Herrity Building, with the following:

- Building Permit Application or Land Disturbing Permit Application, as applicable
- Conservation Agreement, **completed and notarized – all property owners must sign the agreement.**
- Conservation Deposit
- Pro Rata Share Receipt and Agreement
- VDOT permit, if applicable.

After accepting your documents, Site Permits will issue your approved grading plans to you.

Step 8) **Zoning:** Submit one copy of the approved grading plan to the Zoning Permit Review Branch, 2nd floor of the Herrity Building, telephone **703-222-1082**. Remaining copies of the grading plan are for your use; a copy must be on site at all times.

Step 9) **Environmental and Facilities Inspections Division (EFID):** Prior to beginning any land disturbing activity, contact EFID. You may need to have a pre-construction meeting with EFID staff depending on the size of the project. Call **703-324-1950** for more information. EFID is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Herrity Building.

**You must have an approved building permit or land disturbing permit before you can start disturbing any land.**

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## **CONSERVATION DEPOSIT RELEASE**

When the Conservation deposit is paid, Site Permits will send you instructions for release and a Federal W-9 form along with your receipt for the escrow. After construction is complete and the lot is stabilized, you may request the release of the conservation deposit in writing to the Site Permits Branch, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22035-5504. Submit the completed Federal W-9 form with this letter.

Once the request is received, the Environmental and Facilities Inspections Division will verify conformance with the approved grading plan and stabilization of the land. The deposit will be released after inspection approval, provided the County has not expended funds to correct violations. Once the inspection is approved, please allow **four** weeks for the release process.